AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the paragraph beginning on page 13, line 19 and ending on page 14, line 5, as follows:

After drying a reaction vessel made of a nickel alloy at 130°C, potassium fluoride having a moisture percentage of 0.15% by mass and potassium chloride having a moisture percentage of 0.03% by mass were filled in the reaction vessel as a diluent salt such that the mixture ratio in weight is 1:1. Niobium potassium fluoride having a moisture percentage of ~~0.2%~~ 0.02% by mass as a metal salt, which is a raw material, was filled in the reaction vessel, the reaction vessel was covered with a cover, and air inside of the reaction vessel was changed sufficiently with argon gas. After melting by increasing the temperature to 800°C, an amount of sodium, which is in excess of 1% by mass above the amount required to reduce niobium potassium fluoride, was added, and niobium potassium fluoride was reduced. After cooling, the cover was opened, the product was washed with water, and then washed with a mixed acid, and thereby niobium powder containing impurities shown in Table 1 was obtained.